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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 001876

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2015

TAGS: PGOV KPKO CG UG SU

SUBJECT: LRA UPDATE: MONUC-FARDC PLAN SEARCH-AND-CORDON OPS

REF: A. KAMPALA 2342

1B. KINSHASA 1770

1C. KINSHASA 1784

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶11. (C) Summary. According to MONUC sources, Operation Eastern Endeavour is to begin in the vicinity of Aba on November 10, encompassing forces from MONUC and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) in an effort to identify and capture any elements of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) within DRC territory. The operation is expected to last two weeks. However, MONUC military sources have no solid confirmation of any LRA presence in the DRC, despite civilian sightings of military personnel near the DRC-Sudan border.
End Summary.

OPERATION EASTERN ENDEAVOUR

¶12. (C) All following information comes directly from a November 7 internal MONUC restricted memorandum from the Eastern Division Commanding Officer to MONUC Force Commander Lt. Gen. Babacar Gaye, in addition to conversations with military sources at MONUC's Eastern Military Division headquarters. Operation Eastern Endeavour, a joint operation between MONUC and the FARDC, is scheduled to begin November ¶10. The operation has been in development for several weeks following the reported infiltration of LRA leader Vincent Otti and other LRA troops into DRC in September. During the past month, MONUC and FARDC forces have conducted several patrols in the Aba region along the DRC-Sudan border near Garamba Park. Eastern Endeavour will be the next step in a continuing series of operations aimed at locating and capturing any LRA elements in the DRC.

¶13. (C) The FARDC and MONUC have been moving their respective forces into position in northeastern DRC for the past two weeks. On November 2, a MONUC military observer team from Bunia was deployed to Aba, as was one platoon from the MONUC Nepalese battalion. From November 7-9, two companies from the Nepalese battalion will establish a base of operations in the area. These two companies will work jointly with approximately 1,200 FARDC troops during a two-week period.

¶14. (C) Eastern Endeavour's operations will consist of three stages. Stage One is to include information gathering, area domination through military show of force, reconnaissance of objective areas, and further planning of potential military operations. Stage Two will be the conduct of search-and-cordon operations in the previously identified areas. Stage Three intends the domination up to the international border with Sudan through aerial and ground reconnaissance. Operations are expected to conclude November 24, contingent on the outcome of the mission.

LRA SIGHTINGS IN DRC?

¶15. (C) MONUC military sources have received reports from the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) that the main group of the LRA were still present in Sudan, at Razol and Ture, and that two platoons of LRA crossed over from Sudan to Uganda at Senema on November 4. MONUC itself reports they received information that an "infiltration group" of military (approximately 50 persons armed with light and heavy weapons) had been moving in the Kakwa collectivity. MONUC reports the FARDC sent units November 5 to make contact with the supposed infiltrators, but no sightings occurred. MONUC reports civilian sightings of the soldiers as exhausted and dirty, suggesting they may be on the run. MONUC says all evidence collected points to these being LRA elements, but no solid confirmation is available. MONUC adds that no incursions from the UPDF have been reported either.

¶16. (C) Comment: Operation Eastern Endeavour, which has been in the planning stages for weeks, is a demonstration of both the FARDC's and MONUC's commitment to take seriously the threat of LRA incursions into the DRC. Since the LRA incursions into the DRC in September, MONUC and the FARDC have conducted several patrols to locate any suspected LRA elements. Given continuing reports of possible LRA presence in the DRC in the vicinity of Aba and Garamba National Park,

the FARDC and MONUC will endeavor to determine whether a small group of LRA militia are hiding out in a large, remote, and heavily forested, corner of the country. End Comment.
MEECE